

Springfield, PA –Speaking at a meeting of the Carpenters Union Local 845, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) focused on the importance of preparing the next generation of workers for fields in need of more qualified employees, particularly those with jobs that require artisan skills. The Congressman spoke to the fact that the real median income level in Delaware County dropped more than \$300 between 2001 and 2006, the Congressman said a key part of dealing with these trends is through education. — “There are high quality jobs available for those who want to pursue high-value manufacturing fields,” said Congressman Sestak. “We need to expose young men and women who have potential to succeed in these areas to these jobs and focus efforts in education on the skills they need, particularly in math. To further this process locally, I have started a new initiative that will partner our schools with local companies to introduce students to high-value manufacturing fields and establish a relationship between the businesses and the community.”

Congressman Sestak’s proactive approach to preparing his constituents to find jobs includes advocating for and winning a \$187,000 appropriation for the Delaware County Chamber Foundation for a job readiness program. In addition his new partnership complements his Workforce Development Summit held in June and a Higher Education Workforce Development Advisory Committee that he formed to address issues such as ways to better prepare students to meet the needs of local businesses and deal with the lack of participation in training programs for artisan skills.

The Congressman continues his effort to prepare constituents for the workforce at a Job Readiness Conference on August 19 at Upper Darby High School at 6PM. This event will feature a general audience/panel discussion with area business leaders and human resources professionals, followed by small break-out sessions with experts leading workshops on topics such as interviewing, resumes, and networking.

At the union meeting, the Congressman also briefed members on critical legislation to deal with concerns of working men and women, commenting on the significance of the Protecting America’s Workers Act, which he cosponsored. The bill raises safety standards, specifically for equipment, enhances public accountability of employers and assures that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration covers more workers.

Other measures the Congressman has helped pass through the House include:

- The first minimum wage increase in a decade. On July 24, 2008, it rose to \$6.55 per hour, and it will increase to \$7.25 in one year.
- Emergency extended unemployment compensation by granting an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to individuals who have exhausted the 26 weeks of support currently provided, a necessary measure after unemployment increased from 5 to 5.5 percent in May.
- The Genetic Non-Discrimination Act (HR 493), which prohibits health insurance companies and employers from discriminating against people on the basis of genetic test results
- The Combustible Dust Explosion and Fire Prevention Act of 2008 (HR 5522), which directs OSHA to issue an interim final Combustible Dust standard within 90 days. The standard would minimize hazards associated with combustible dust through improved housekeeping, engineering controls, worker training and a written combustible dust safety program.
- The Trade and Globalization Act HR 3920, which overhauls the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program by expanding opportunities for job training to transition workers into 21st Century jobs to take advantage of increasing globalization.
- The Popcorn Workers Lung Disease Act (HR 2693), which mandates that OSHA issue a standard within 90 days to minimize workers' exposure to diacetyl in popcorn and flavorings manufacturing plants; requires employers to develop a written exposure control plan that would use engineering controls and respirators to protect workers, and to conduct medical monitoring to determine whether workers' health continued to be harmed.
- The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (HR 2831), which rectifies the Supreme Court decision that made it much harder for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims. The act restores the longstanding interpretation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act – that each paycheck that results from a discriminatory decision is itself a discriminatory act that resets the clock on the 180-day period within which a worker must file.
- The Collective Bargaining for Public Safety Personnel HR 980, which would provide

firefighters and police officers with basic workplace collective bargaining rights

- The Paycheck Fairness Act (HR 1338), which amends the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex and for other purposes.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.